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RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0529  
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 0183  
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE 0545  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 4255  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 2544  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0568  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1204  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 1853  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1247  
RUEHVN/USMISSION USOSCE 2521  
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC 0114

C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 000700

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/19/2018

TAGS: PHUM PGOV PREL UZ

SUBJECT: RUMORS CONTINUE TO SWIRL AROUND YUSUF JUMAEV CASE

REF: A. TASHKENT 463

1B. TASHKENT 127

Classified By: POLOFF R. FITZMAURICE FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D)

11. (C) Family members of dissident poet Yusuf Jumaev, who in April was sentenced to five years' imprisonment at a minimum-security labor camp for resisting arrest and harming a police officer (ref A), continue to report contradictory and unsubstantiated information about Jumaev's condition and the whereabouts of his son Mashrab, who in January was sentenced to three years' imprisonment at a maximum-security facility for assaulting an individual with a knife (ref B). A case in point is a June 17 Inter Press Service article, in which Gulnova Oltieva, Jumaev's wife, is reported as stating that her husband "was tortured and killed last year." Nevertheless, on June 18, poloff received an email from Oltieva stating that Jumaev had been retried for another unspecified offense and had his sentence lengthened by an unspecified amount of time. Poloff requested more information from Oltieva, but has not yet received a response.

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND OTHERS DOUBT FAMILY'S CLAIMS

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12. (C) After unsubstantiated reports appeared in the past few weeks on the independent Uznews.net website that both Yusuf Jumaev and Mashrab Jumaev had escaped or otherwise disappeared from prison, poloff asked several human rights activists for confirmation. Human Rights Watch director Igor Vorontsov agreed that much of the information reported to independent websites by the Jumaev family and others was contradictory or exaggerated. He was unable to confirm any reports that either Yusuf or Mashrab had disappeared from prison and said that HRW was not following the case closely.

13. (C) Local human rights activist Surat Ikramov, who has followed the Jumaev case closely, admitted frustration to poloff about the unsubstantiated reports, which he assumed were coming from Oltieva and Jumaev's other son Alisher, who are currently seeking political asylum in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Ikramov believed that Oltieva and Alisher received their information from relatives remaining in Bukhara, and he speculated that their interpretation of facts was most likely distorted by a game of long-distance telephony. Ikramov also cast doubt on the possibility that Mashrab could have escaped from the maximum-security prison where he is being held. Instead, he believed that family members might have simply assumed the worst when prison officials might have refused to let them visit him (Note: Prisoners are permitted to receive relatives once a month, but prison officials sometimes take away their visitation rights, claiming that they had violated internal prison regulations. End note.) Ikramov also reported that Jumaev had been previously taken from his colony to work on public projects with other prisoners elsewhere in the country, and speculated that this might have happened again.

14. (C) Human rights lawyer Rukhiddin Komilov, who at one point attempted to defend Jumaev in court, was concerned about Yusuf and Mashrab's condition, but he also doubted that they had actually disappeared from prison. Both Ikramov and Komilov noted that Jumaev had received a relatively light sentence and speculated that he might be released during the next annual amnesty, most likely in December 2008. Colleagues at the British, French, and German Embassies were also unable to substantiate any of the reports and expressed skepticism and frustration to poloff about the case.

15. (C) Comment: We believe that Oltieva was either misquoted in the Inter Press article or was exaggerating her knowledge of her husband's condition. We also have been unable to substantiate claims about Yusuf and Mashrab's alleged disappearances. We agree with Ikramov that Oltieva and Alisher's interpretation of events might be distorted by a long-distance game of telephony that they are playing with relatives remaining behind in Bukhara. We believe that the trauma which the family has no doubt experienced since Yusuf and Mashrab were imprisoned may be clouding their perceptions of events. It is also possible that the family believes that the more they exaggerate events to independent websites, the more likely it will be that Western governments, principally the United States, will weigh in with the Uzbek government and help free their family members. Sadly, the exact opposite is happening. The large amount of unsubstantiated and contradictory information being reported by the Jumaev has eroded their credibility with human rights activists, many of whom have ceased following the case closely.

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